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SPEECH

—BY—

*and ✓*  
D. L. EMERSON, OF OAKLAND,

—ON—

# Oakland

JUDGED FROM AN

EASTERN STANDPOINT,

DELIVERED IN DIETZ HALL, (OAKLAND,)

NOV. 30, 1875.



Single Copies, 25 Cents : 5 for \$1 00 ; 100 for \$15 00.

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## ANNOUNCEMENT.

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The undersigned is prepared to lecture on either one of the following subjects, at prices varying according to the time, place, occasion and other circumstances:

*Eloquence and The Orators:*

*The World's Greatest Orators, Ancient and Modern;*

*Elements of Success;*

*Popular Errors and Popular Tendencies.*

To which will soon be added a lecture on "*Gush*"—a theme which gives scope for a much greater variety of original thought and apt illustration than might at first be supposed.

He is also prepared to give a course of lectures—either six in number or sixty—on the distinguishing characteristics of one hundred or more of the most famous Orators, Advocates, Divines, Actors, Actresses, Professional Readers and Lecturers of Ancient and Modern Times. These lectures will include a critical analysis of the style of thought and expression of each; also, a comparison of one with another.

Twenty-five years of earnest study in this rich field for the exercise of the critical faculty, render the preparation of such lectures less laborious than they would otherwise be.

The following notices of the Press in different sections of the country afford some guarantee that the audiences who may listen to any of these lectures will not be required to *endure* the old-fashioned *professional* style; nor yet the scarcely less objectionable *new-fashioned* style of the merely professional vocal gymnast:

[*From the Oakland Daily Tribune, Dec. 3, 1875*]

MR. EMERSON'S LECTURE—OAKLAND JUDGED FROM AN EASTERN STANDPOINT—  
A MASTERLY EFFORT BY ONE OF OUR OLD CITIZENS.

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Notwithstanding the heavy rain-storm which prevailed last night, Mr. Emerson was greeted by an audience composed of the most wealthy, learned, and appreciative of our citizens, who completely filled Dietz Hall, some even standing in the entry. Mr. Emerson's audacious advertising, and the assurances of his old friends had raised the very highest expectations, and the audience were evidently determined not to surrender to the speaker; but he had not spoken more than five minutes before the entire assemblage seemed to say, "we give it up." Mr. Emerson spoke one hour and a half, and we did not see a single person leave the hall; all were held in wrapt attention till the close. The lecturer had promised the people of Oakland a great deal—some thought too much altogether—but he gave us even more than he promised. His delivery is characterized by an utter abandonment to his subject, and it does not seem to require the slightest effort for him to pitch his voice, of wonderful flexibility and power, on any key, rising in an instant from the deepest bass to the lightest tones of wit and raillery. And his style of composition is equally varied. He reasons by means of rigid logic, by illustrations—some of them droll enough—by wit, sarcasm and, above all, by forcible jesture. So far as we know, the lecture gave universal satisfaction, and if tens of thousands were published for general circulation, they would benefit Oakland immensely. We understand this is to be done as soon as possible, though Mr. Emerson tells us it will take some little time to write out the extemporized portions of his speech, which was certainly brilliant and grand.

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[*From the Boston Journal, Oct. 3, 1872.*]

D. L. EMERSON, of California, lectured Tuesday evening in Tremont Temple, on "The World's Greatest Orators, Ancient and Modern." The lecture was a masterly production, evincing vast research and preparation.

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[*From the Pittsburg Chronicle, Dec. 3, 1870.*]

MR. EMERSON'S LECTURE.—The lecture by D. L. Emerson, Esq., last evening, in the Sixth Presbyterian Church, was attended by a very large audience, and was a perfect success in every respect. Mr. Emerson is an eloquent speaker, and we understand that our citizens will have an opportunity of hearing him again on Monday evening next on a popular subject.

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[*From the Pittsburg, Pa., Gazette, Dec. 3, 1870.*]

MR. EMERSON'S LECTURE.—This gentleman's lecture at Dr. Wilson's Church, Thursday evening, was spoken of as a splendid effort by all who heard it.

There was a large audience present, and at the close of the lecture Dr. Wilson spoke of it as one of the most instructive and eloquent lectures that has ever been delivered in this city. Mr. Emerson will probably speak here again on popular subjects.

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[*Extracts from the San Francisco Golden Era, Dec. 17, 1871.*]

His reputation in the lecturing field is too well established to need an extended criticism from us. He is now under engagement to deliver the lectures he is now preparing on his return to the East, where superior talents in this field command something more than a mere nominal sum.

Mr. Emerson's delivery is clear, deliberate and emphatic. As a speaker, he is noted for his intense earnestness—a quality which includes many others, and which contains the chief secret of oratorical success. He has that perfect control over a voice of great compass and power, which many years of elocutionary training will secure.

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(*Letter from Rev. J. E. Moorehead.*)

BEAVER FALLS, April 16, 1872.

MR. D. L. EMERSON:—DEAR SIR: Having lived much of my time in or near Pittsburg, I have had opportunity—and of course improved it—of hearing most of the eminent orators of the country. And now, sir, I assure you that I have never heard any lecture with which any of the three, which you delivered in Beaver Falls last week, will not bear favorable comparison. I hope to see your name on the list of orators for next winter, in Library Hall, Pittsburg.

With kindest regards, I am, &c., yours,

J. D. MOOREHEAD,

Pastor Presbyterian Church, Beaver Falls

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(*Correspondence of the Pittsburg Gazette.*)

BEAVER FALLS, April 13, 1872.

I am happy to say that we are side by side with you in so far as the lectures are concerned. I now speak not of the quantity but of the quality. D. L. Emerson, of California, gave us this week three such literary treats as are calculated to make hungry minded mortals glad. Had any of our Committee heard his lecture either on "The Elements of Success," "The Sandwich Islands," or "Eloquence and the Orators," California, I am satisfied, would be represented next winter in Library Hall.

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ERRATUM.—For the word "professional"—first page of this announcement—read *professionial*.



S P E E C H

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## OAKLAND

### JUDGED FROM AN EASTERN STANDPOINT.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—To every one of those who did me the high honor to come to this place, last Friday evening, and wait for my appearance, longer, probably, than any other speaker was ever waited for, under similar circumstances, on this Coast, I wish, on this occasion, to tender my most profound and heartfelt *thanks*. I was in my room, down on Sixth street, wearied by the labors of the day, supposing that I had made such arrangements that the hall would not be lighted up, and a little disappointed, I confess, that God should have seen fit, just at that time, to pour down such copious floods of glorious rain; but had I known that even fifty, of the three hundred persons then present, were waiting for me here, I would have come here and “spoke my little piece” if I had been compelled to *swim* through ice-water!

Again, I say, I *thank* you.

I have been absent from Oakland long enough to enable me to look at our fair city through Eastern eyes—long enough to see and to realize what rapid strides the city is taking toward a fulfillment of the fondest dreams of the most sanguine citizen. And I wish, to-night, to contrast Oakland with one or more of our Eastern cities of about the same size, that we may settle the question, at once and forever, as to whether the present values of our property are founded on a solid gold basis, or merely upon the flexible plank of inflation, rotten in the middle and not fastened at either end. I intend, also, before I get through, to answer the question, pretty effectually, whether every owner of real estate in this city, in estimating the value of his earthly possessions, may not safely add from 30 to 50 per cent. to the present market price and wait patiently, if need be, for purchasers to come, until a sufficient number of insane

speculators shall have gone down, hopelessly, in the seething vortex of wild venture to convince the rest that only *real* property is wealth and that peace of mind alone is happiness. I do not come before you, to-night, with a classical oration, the utterance of whose rounded periods will fall on your ears like the sweet strains of artistic music. And, you listen so often to the bewitching cadences of your scholars and your orators, that a few plain facts, couched in homely phrase, may afford a variety, for the passing hour, not altogether unendurable. The question is eminently a practical one of vast financial importance; and I am well aware that neither capital nor labor is especially attracted by the gorgeous flowers of rhetoric, and that the consummate *acting* of a ROSCIUS would not be regarded by an Oakland banker as sufficient security for the loan of a dollar. He might, possibly, accept the artistic grimaces and the appropriate gestures as *collateral* security *after* the first mortgage on his real estate had been filed for record. And, moreover, shrewd business men look with suspicion even on a statement of facts, when those facts are coated all over with allopathic quantities of sweet epithets. I intend, therefore, this evening, to employ plain and even homely words; and if I should give utterance to some expressions which *smack of the "Back-woods districts,"* as we say down East, I do not want you to attribute such expressions to any wish, on my part, to appear either coarse or rude, but rather to the fact, far less reprehensible, though quite as unfortunate, that my *early* education was somewhat neglected. And, in referring to the past history of Oakland, which I shall do at some length, if I should seem to reflect unjustly on any one of her citizens, I disclaim in the outset any such intention. Indeed, I shall avoid as far as possible any unwelcome personalities. That distinguished hypochondriac—Josh Billings—says that men love to be "cussed" if they can only make money by it; and if I should say anything to-night which savors of cursing, I shall do so with the intention of increasing your resources. I will qualify this remark, however,—for it is cowardly and mean to be hypocritical—by saying that I would not willingly add a single dollar to the wealth of any man, or any set of men, who have ever sought to cripple and crush Oakland. Such men would be richer

than they deserve, already, if they were wheeling *sand* on Alcatraz Island for a pound, per day, of bread and meat.

Now, lest any of you should imagine that I come here, to-night, for the purpose of inflating values unduly, I will make a proposition or two before I get through, which will convince you, I think, not only of my boundless faith in Oakland, but also of my willingness to forfeit a few thousand dollars if it should happen to turn out that my confidence in Oakland is misplaced. Any shrewd financier, on visiting our city, will be especially impressed with two important facts. The first fact is, the unequalled advantages and the supreme beauty of our situation; our mild, equable climate, the romantic and sublime scenery, whichever way we turn our eyes,—for the Pacific Ocean, lashed by the storm, is not less sublime than the snow-capped peaks of the everlasting hills—and the peculiar attractiveness and the enchanting beauty of our homes—*not oases* in the midst of the desert, but *green bowers*, exhaling sweet orders, nestling in the very bosom of an earthly Paradise. This is the first fact. The next fact which would at once impress and startle him is not quite as poetical as the first, but it is certainly not less important, and its strange significance is intensified by the first. This fact is the low price of *business* property and the small difference between the prices of business property and residence property, as compared with this same difference in Eastern cities. Let us examine this financial inconsistency, for a little while, that we may see clearly why it exists, and thus, at least, be prepared to remove and forever obliterate it.

While traveling from place to place in the East, I have taken the pains to make some inquiries, and I speak far within the truth when I tell you that *business* property in any one of a hundred prosperous cities, about the size of Oakland, in the Eastern States, will sell, to-day,—although real estate is in a more depressed condition there now than at any previous period since 1857,—for nearly *twice* as much, over and above the actual value of the improvements, as Oakland business property will sell for. Take any half-dozen cities in Massachusetts—Lynn, Lawrence, Haverell, Worcester, Fall River, Springfield,—each one of which is a little larger, I admit, than Oakland, but neither one of which is increasing in numbers, according to its

population, one-half as fast as Oakland, and you will find this statement of mine to be true, unless, indeed, it discriminates *against* those cities. Take Worcester, Mass., as a fair sample of a flourishing Eastern city. If you could buy 100x100 feet of the best property in that city for \$100,000 in gold, besides the actual value of the improvements, you would have a hundred offers, inside of a week, of a very large advance over that price. One of the best lots of this size in Oakland would not bring, I suppose, more than \$70,000. But I found, on inquiry, that the price of residence property in and about Worcester, if we except those lots which will be soon in demand for business purposes, does not differ very materially from the price here. Now, the important question is, *why* is this so? In the first place, this difference is *not* due to the difference in rates of interest. The average rate of interest in Worcester, for the last five years, has been as high as 8 per cent.; the average rate in Oakland, during that period, has not much exceeded 10 per cent. This difference is not due to a difference in the rate of taxation. If there is any one question concerning which you are apt to be deceived, it is this single question of taxation. I do not remember the exact rate of taxation in Worcester, but I do know one fact, and I challenge investigation as to its full force and validity, and it is this, namely: that any one of the New England States pays a higher *rate* of taxation than California pays, and that an average New England city is taxed at a higher rate than Oakland is taxed. Allow me to remind you that if you own a piece of property there, you pay taxes on the full value of that property.

I am very sorry to say that I own a good many pieces of real estate in New England, and I will sell it to any of you for 10 per cent. less than it is taxed for. I don't mean 10 per cent. less than it cost me; that I won't do. And, while I am about it, I may as well own up to a regular Oakland trick and confess that if I should sell for *less* than it cost me, I should have to *hire* somebody to take a part of it off my hands! Of course, a *very* rich man in the East,—one who can afford to pay any amount of taxes,—can get a liberal reduction as they do here. Why not? How do they obtain gold to pave the streets of Paradise with, if rich men don't take it with them when they

die? But, to return; and if you want me to utter the most abominable lie that was ever told in Oakland, I will admit that this difference in favor of Worcester property is partly due to the *superiority of that climate*. The climate there is *perfectly splendid*. We had, last Winter, *twenty-two* days of the most bracing zero weather, the most *horribly* bracing weather, in the city of Boston, during the month of February alone; and no washer-woman ever cultivated the acquaintance of a hot flat-iron, after nine o'clock at night, more assiduously than we did to keep our feet from freezing in bed. "Worcester is a manufacturing city," you will say. Yes, I admit that it is. And if you will take your pencil and note book with you and canvas this city thoroughly, you will find a very large number of manufactories here. But suppose there were *none* here, would you swap your commercial advantages for *five times* the number of Worcester's manufactories? I beg your pardon for asking the stupid question. One word now as to the patronage of those Eastern cities. We often hear it said that there are more *people* there than here. My answer is that there are more places of business, in proportion to the population, east of Chicago than there are either in this city or this State.

Trade is eminently aggressive in the East. You will find there the sharpest rivalry between villages and cities. Well, what about the *debt* of Worcester as compared with that of Oakland? I do not know how much money that city owes, but if any of you will take the trouble to ascertain and you do not find that Worcester owes *five times* as much as Oakland, I will pay for a supper, at the Grand Central Hotel, for twelve of the heartiest eaters in this city—and I do not know but I would say thirteen; and, paradoxical as it may seem, other things *equal*, cities flourish in proportion to their debts—*provided the money is well expended*.

Boston is one of the most prosperous cities on this continent; and, except New York, Boston owes nearly twice as much, according to her population, as any other city on the continent. But they don't have any Boss Tweeds, nor any other bosses, to any great extent in Boston; and New York has become disgusted with the one-man power; and I *thought* I recognized just a little of that wholesome kind of disgust in Oakland at

one or two of your late elections. *Overthrow* the one-man power wherever it *dares* to show its audacious head! We have had too much of it even in Oakland, but it is not very popular just now. And one word more as to the debts of cities. You can scarcely find a *flourishing* city in New England—mark my words, a *flourishing* city—of the size of Oakland, which does not owe a *million dollars*. And they owe their *prosperity* to their debts. Capitalists fear taxation, it is true, but they fear stagnation and death still more; and the best preparation for the reduction of taxes is to make such public improvements as to attract capital, and thereby increase your resources. Taxes in Boston, with her enormous debt of \$40,000,000, are not very high. But she has something to *show* for her debt. My taxes in Oakland are not as high, relatively, as they were a few years ago when we owed only \$80,000; and I have never yet asked the Board of Equalization to reduce them, though I have always paid a much higher *rate* of taxation than some *rich* men that I could name. And it was just good enough for me; I might have been rich, too, if I had not taken to lecturing and had been, in other respects, *sharp*. It is not manly for us to whine over a little debt of four or five hundred thousand dollars, which Dr. Merritt alone could pay out of the net proceeds of one of his little side speculations in real estate down by the lake. And while I think of it, let me say one word in regard to that beautiful sheet of water. Some people *declare* that that lake isn't worth a—*dam*. But it *is* worth a dam, and a good dam, too; and I hope the City Council will dam it. Now, my friends, I am not in favor, and never was in favor, of shutting my eyes and wading, thoughtlessly, into an ocean of debt; but if this city should borrow \$200,000, more or less, put a tunnel through yonder hill, and make a cheap toll road into those vast and inexhaustible valleys beyond, she would add to her property \$4,000,000 before you could see daylight through that tunnel. And the toll would pay the interest on the debt twice over.

Since writing the above, I have ascertained the cheering fact that this grand enterprise is to be undertaken, at once, by private capital; that the Floods and the O'Briens and their friends have come forward and are going to *aid* to Oakland's prosperity by snatching this splendid opportunity from her grasp. I do

not know how much stock Senator Sharon will take in this company, now fully organized; but I *do* know that the road—which is to be a *rail* road—when completed, will appear more beautiful to the people of Oakland than the *rose of Sharon and the lillies of the valleys*. And an appropriation of another \$100,000 for the encouragement of manufactures in our midst would pay us ten per cent. per *month* on the investment.

Now, the simple fact that business property is so much higher, relatively, in Eastern cities than in this city involves no mystery. This is the explanation, and it is easy and simple: Capitalists there, as well as in San Francisco, have learned perfectly how to make their ground pay rent four or five times over. In other words they build high. And allow me to say that the architecture even of New York City and of Boston is far less elaborate and expensive, but is, on the whole, much better adapted to the purposes of trade than the architecture of San Francisco. A. T. Stewart's dry goods palace, five stories high, is a very plain structure; but no other building on this continent is so well adapted to his business as that. And Mr. Stewart has managed from the first to make a nice little profit of a couple of millions a year out of that improvement, although when he commenced the building, one mile above the limit of retail trade in dry goods, the enterprise was called *Stewart's folly*. But if he was a fool he was NOT *a coward*. And a little *genuine courage, a little downright, old-fashioned, New England pluck, often makes up for a woful lack of brains!* Dire necessity has compelled me to try it and I speak, therefore, from *sud* experience. The famous *Tribune* building, *ten stories high*, is a brick structure. Another building, just completed, on lower Broadway, also ten stories high, is built of brick; and no building material on this earth will stand earthquakes or fire better than brick, if the walls are well tied together with iron. Simetry, beauty, adaptability, strength, these are the four fundamental principles of architecture. Now, as to the height of buildings: *Six-story* buildings, in the East, are scarcely higher than an average five-story building in San Francisco; and the former answer the purposes of trade even better; and it has been demonstrated beyond a doubt that high structures resist the earthquake shocks much better than low ones. The Wilcox

block stood the great shock of 1868 very much better than any other in town, and the walls of that building are only one foot thick; but the Captain has had a little experience with *anchors* in his day, and he profited by that experience, I assure you, when he reconstructed that building. One word right here as to the commercial value of a good elevator which will make its round trip every three minutes all day. Such an elevator in a five story building 80x100 feet, or larger, *does increase* the rents of that property from 25 to 40 per cent., above the cost of running it, both in the East and in San Francisco.

Now, fellow citizens, with these facts in full view, listen to me patiently while I prove, beyond the shadow of a reasonable doubt, that any one hundred feet square, including a corner, even on the *wrong* side of Broadway, Oakland, between Eighth and Fourteenth streets, will pay a large interest on \$1,000 per front foot, besides interest on the cost of the improvement. Let us see. I am prepared to take the contract to cover every square inch of this space with a symmetrical and beautiful edifice, five stories high and earthquake-proof, with a pressed brick front, or some other suitable front, properly ornamented, and containing an elevator of the kind just mentioned, for the sum of \$130,000. This structure will contain a basement 100x100 feet, two stores in the first story nearly 50x100 feet each, and, in the second story, two stores of the same size. The three upper stories will contain ninety rooms, any one of which will be much more desirable, partly on account of the elevator and partly on account of the *attractiveness* of such a structure, and for other important reasons, than the *best* room on Broadway. Now, as to the rent: Basing my calculations on the rents actually paid on the *wrong* side of Broadway, the first story will bring \$500 per month; the basement will rent for \$100 per month; the second story will rent for \$350 per month. The best rooms on Broadway bring readily \$20 per month. We will rate these at \$18 each, which, with the elevator, are better worth twice that sum than any room on Broadway is worth \$25. Well, these various sums foot up \$2,570 per month. The interest on the \$230,000—the value of the land at \$1,000 per front foot and the cost of the building,—amounts, in round numbers, to \$1,917 per month. Deducting this sum



from the \$2,570 and we have left a nice little margin of \$7,836 per annum for taxes, insurance and other incidental expenses. Now, if the advice which I am going to give you property holders on the *wrong* side of Broadway is not worth anything to you, please remember that it don't cost you very much. Anyhow, the advice is that you better not offer again to sell your property for *fifty cents* on the dollar. People will respect you just as much if you ask a *respectable* price for it. If owners of real estate on the *right* side of Broadway want to barter away their birthrites for a *mess of pottage*, let them do it. We can't *help* it, but we *can* *pitty* them and *pray* for them. And I only reiterate the well nigh universal opinion of our citizens, who are the best informed on this subject, when I say that *two thousand* rooms and fifty stores of the kind above named could all be rented here to good tenants long before they can be constructed. Am I asked, now, why I, pretending to have so much faith in the intrinsic value of our real estate, do not, at once, commence the erection of some such structure? The question is eminently proper, and this is my answer. Like some other men that I could name, I am not *able* to erect such an edifice. But I will tell you what I *am* able to do: I am able to submit to you capitalists a proposition which will prove my faith in my own statements. I will sell 100x100 feet of my Twelfth street property for 65 per cent. of its actual value, provided every square inch of it shall be covered by a three-story building, or a five-story building, with an elevator. And if I can have the privilege of buying the property back at an advance of \$20,000, over and above the cost, within two years and a half from the completion of the improvement, I will put \$10,000 into the building; and if I do *not* find a purchaser for it at that time and that advanced price, I will *forfeit* the \$10,000 and \$5,000 besides. I will also submit another proposition, separate and distinct from the first: I will take a lease of those premises for three years, or *five years*, from the date of the completion of the building, at an annual rental equal to *fourteen* per cent. per annum on the cost of the land and the improvement. I have two good tenants already for the first and second stories, and if I cannot lease the upper story to good advantage I will open a *free school* up there and teach little children, as well as

I know how, the fundamental principles and the solemn necessity of enterprise and energy in all *financial* undertakings.

Now, if any of you have half as much faith in your own city as I have, we can make a bargain. I do not ask you to come forward and help me—I am not quite as cheeky as that—but I do come and offer you at least \$20,000 if you will seize an opportunity to help yourselves.

But I hear capitalists say “Bring us the tenants and we will build just what they want; but we don’t see where they are coming from.” Well, suppose you spread molasses on a sheet of paper, during the month of August, and then ask where the *flies* are coming from? While you are discussing that profound question, three thousand enterprising flies will be enjoying a good square meal right before your face. And, moreover, the molasses will make them stick there—just as good stores make tenants stick. Or, suppose the owners of this ferry, instead of making ample provision for the half million already here and the million more soon to come, had exacted a guarantee from the City Council that sufficient patronage should be furnished them? Or, to show the *infinite folly* in this particular case of such want of faith, suppose every woman in this city should take a solemn oath that she will never provide another article of infantile wearing apparel till *the child is born*? They won’t take any such stupid oath; and what is better, the garments will not *pinch* after they are put on. We have just 250 merchants in this city waiting and praying for larger stores. One told me the other day that he waited two years for such a store and then had to accept one altogether too small. And how long will the stores which they leave remain unoccupied? Not more than three minutes and a half. But I am met at this point, by persons with whom I have conversed, with the extraordinary objection that the people of this city will not occupy such high buildings and will not appreciate good elevators. My answer is, prove to me the truth of the following *false* declarations and I will admit the validity of the objection. The first false declaration is, that the people of Oakland are *materially different* from other American citizens of intelligence and culture. The second falsehood and slander is that they love to trot up and down stairs better than other folks; and the third

is that they do not appreciate, as fully as other people, the enchanting panorama which our city presents to one looking out of a fourth story. Prove these *false* statements to be *true* and I will *consider* your objection. Indeed, rooms in the third and fourth stories are much preferred even here, especially in Winter. The landlord of the Grand Central Hotel, in this city,—which would be *grand* if it were not “central,” for its patrons inform me that it is grandly kept—its landlord tells me that his rooms in the fourth story are greatly preferred even by Oakland people. And with good reason: It is more quiet up there; the air is more healthful and the outlook is incomparably better, and besides this it would be better for us all, both bodily and spiritually, *if we lived nearer heaven*. If a man is not able to improve his property as he could wish, he is fully justified in making temporary improvements as a means to a higher end.

And, right here, I want to make a frank confession. When I built my block of little stores on the wrong side of Broadway, above Twelfth street, I was called a fool for supposing that trade would ever extend as high up as that. And I *was* one of the biggest fools in this city; but *my* folly extended in the opposite direction. If I had, at that time, erected a three-story building 100x100 feet—not of brick then but of wood—I could hold up a bag of gold before you to-night containing just \$20,000 more than I now possess. They *say* an honest confession is good for the soul, but I don't see it *exactly* in that light. Nor am I not quite as complacent as the good deacon was of whom I once read. He confessed to his brethren that he was a great sinner, and thanked God that he was not ashamed to own it. I will make the confession just to please you, but I won't go another inch!

Now, I wish to enumerate as briefly as possible, some of the main obstacles, which, from time to time, have stood in the way of Oakland's prosperity, in order that we may have some sort of a valid excuse to offer the new-comer who is enabled to profit by our folly.

Some of my friends have kindly informed me that no man can speak in Oakland more than an hour and still be orthodox. Now, I want to be orthodox—of course I do—and I want to speak more than an hour; and if you will let me do both and

will hear me through completely to the end, I will make the same solemn promise to you which the Irishman made to the Lord during a storm at sea. He thought he was going to be cast away and he fell down on his knees and prayed as follows : " Oh Lord Jasus, if ye will only spare poor Pat's life now joost, it will be a *lang time* before he will be throubling your Riverence with his prayers again ! " Substitutue *lectures* for prayers, and I am that Irishman !

When I first came to Oakland our population numbered less than 1000 ; and at that time this whole region of country above Seventh street was the most attractive cow-pasture that you ever beheld. Then, and for years after, all the travel to San Francisco was by way of the creek route ; and it was considered a risky venture to embark on that tedious journey without sufficient food for several meals ; for that bar at the mouth of the creek, about as changeable as a hungry hen trying to catch a grasshopper, would be very apt to *debar* us from anything like a rapid transit. How often have I seen anxious wives, standing on the Oakland wharf and peering out through the villainous fog, trying to catch a glimpse of their hungry husbands *stuck in the mud!* But now the *Ball* has been set in motion, his dredger has removed the bar and it is no longer a bar to our progress. In a few years the new ferry route was completed and it made at first, *four* round trips a day. And when we petitioned for one *more* trip, we were met with the discouraging promise that our request should be granted as soon as the census taker could record, under oath, twenty-five new births in Oakland. No ! that was not the *exact* promise—it was not *one-half* as encouraging as that. Now what a change ! I do not know, perhaps you know, but I very much doubt it, a single other ferry in the United States so ample and complete in all its appointments as this ; and I am *sure* there is none over which you can ride with so much comfort for so little money. At that time, also, we had a whole army, both *in* Oakland and *out of* it who seemed sworn to injure our city all they could. No *frog-pond* in the United States ever sent up, during the month of April, so infernal a din to the delicate ears of any nervous invalid as this army of human frogs poured into the ears of citizens and strangers in depreciation of our

unrivaled city. For some unaccountable reason Oakland was full of them, San Francisco was full of them, and the country all about was full of them. If a people ever had occasion to curse Pharaoh and pity the Israelites, we were that people. If these *intellectual* exclamation points saw a man pacing off a lot of land or carting a bunch of shingles across town, they would forthwith harrangue him, with lugubrious countenances, on the supreme folly of squandering his hard earned dollars on any such a worthless bed of sand. And these croakers, so numerous and so persistent, we ought to confess with shame, had their *influence* upon all of us. I find here a few of them now—there are not cluds and brickbats enough on the Pacific Coast to make them duck their heads and hold their tongues,—but their croaking is comparatively *harmless* now—like the numbling of an idiot which everybody is accustomed to, even their presence and jargon would be more or less missed. I could enumerate the almost *insuperable* obstacles which we had to encounter in the adjustment of our adverse land titles. But the recital would be long and tedious and might do injustice to innocent parties. And it is sufficient for us, during all time to come, that the highest tribunals of the land have declared to us, by solemn decree, that we may now “read our titles clear to mansions in”—Oakland. About that time also our public schools were in a deplorable condition; and if any member of the City Council had proposed to borrow \$900 for educational purposes, he would have been unceremoniously dumped into the bay by outraged citizens. And I do not know what we should have done for public schools, if the first Mayor of Oakland, a graduate of Harvard, I believe, and a benefactor to our town, had not generously come *forward* and *donated* to our city a school house worth *several hundred dollars*; and all he ever received in return for his magnificent gift was only about nine miles of our miserable and worthless marshy water front—which would sell to-day for \$500,000!

Now, I do not know of a city on this continent which has expended its money so liberally and so judiciously in behalf of our system of public instruction. The only danger against which I would warn you is that of seeking to *imitate* the schools

of the East by crushing and overwhelming the poor pupils with a multiplicity of studies.

Then, the town was *distracted* for a year or so over the question of a railroad terminus. *That* question is now settled to our entire satisfaction. After that we had a squabble over the location of our City Hall. Some wanted it at the Point, others wanted it near the bridge on Twelfth street, a large number were *determined* to have it on one of the plazas down town, and an old Frenchman on First street, who didn't understand the English language "so besser als goot," supposing it was to be a *billiard hall* for the accommodation of the city officials, generously offered to donate one-half of his *back yard* for the purpose, together with an alley-way leading in. But the building was at length located where it ought to be, and it is a credit to the town. Then, two or three men, who were ambitious to immortalize their names, exploded a tremendous bombshell in our midst in the shape of a proposition to alter the city grade. And forthwith they collected the measuring rods of half a dozen surveyors, piled them up, one on top of another, and called into requisition the best microscopes to be found on the Coast, in order to *prove* that there *was* an infinitesimal difference in the length of those measures; and, during the controversy that ensued one of the most conscientious and one of the most competent surveyors that ever came to this Coast—and that man's name is W. F. Boardman—was shamefully and wantonly misrepresented and traduced. But let that pass—I beg your pardon for telling this truth—at any rate the one-man power prevailed; the grade was altered, and in spite of the temporary set-back the price of real estate continued to advance. In the next place a most startling *rumor* was set afloat by some mischievous individual which produced a *terrific* excitement in this entire community. This rumor was to the effect that two or three men, nobody knows who, living at Oakland Point, or somewhere else, were concocting a scheme by which our county buildings were to be attached to those slaughter houses in East Oakland, in order that—so the rumor ran—cattle thieves might enjoy a very *sensible* foretaste of the delectable orders of San Quinten before conviction; and that lawyers and Judges might have a perpet-

nal. *olfactory* demonstration of the solemn necessity of a sure and swift administration of justice.

This was the rumor, and the excitement it produced was simply *tremendous*. It alienated old friends. It revived for a time the old *habit*, once chronic and popular across the Bay, but not so any longer, of sneering at Oakland. I am told it separated two or three families—at any rate several divorce cases immediately followed—and, like the presence of a pestilential disease, it made some of us feel sick, when we were well, and caused others to think that they were *well* who were soon after taken sick. No earthquake ever unsettled real estate like this report. It revived the spirits of the croakers. It opened our eyes very wide to the uncertainties of all things pertaining to earth; but when that jail and court house took to themselves the wings of the morning and flew—to the plaza down town—we were more thoroughly convinced than ever before that the Holy scriptures are designed for all classes and conditions of men. People in West Oakland might be heard quoting such passages as these: “*They* came to a place where two seas met and they run the ship aground;” “Where I am, there shall *ye*”—meaning the county seat—“be also.” And God said “Let there be light, and there was light.” In East Oakland, the people exclaimed, “Oh, ye generation of vipers!” “Ye are of your father, the *devil*, and his works ye do;” “Where the *carcass* is, there are the eagles gathered together.” And now we hear the people of both sections sweetly chanting together that beautiful prophesy of Holy Writ: “The lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and the little child shall lead them.”

The last and only obstacle in the way of our future greatness was the difficulty of securing Congressional aid in making the best and safest natural harbor on this continent available for commercial purposes. The securing of that appropriation, in the face of a hydraheaded and a tremendous opposition, was a signal triumph; and I think that Congressman Page is one of the brightest pages in Oakland’s history. I confess that I was a little skeptical about an appropriation for this grand work. But our friends in Congress—and we have a host of them East—mean business now in relation to this matter. The first \$100,000 has been well expended; the second \$100,000 will be

forthcoming; a large appropriation will be made this Winter; they are surveying the route for the new canal, and we shall soon have a harbor which will be worth more to Oakland than five times the manufactories of Lowell would be to that city. And I am informed by one of the largest owners in the Water Front Co., who has never yet misinformed me and never deceived me, that water lots will soon be offered for sale at reasonable prices.

These obstacles in the way of Oakland's prosperity were very formidable; but now they are all overcome. And I should like to have some *inveterate growler*, some man who possesses a rare genius for manufacturing *bugbears*, mention a single barrier to our future greatness and grandeur; and then I should like to have a *chance* at that man for about twenty minutes! The only obstacle in our way, one-half as formidable as a moist spider's web, is *the enormous price of lots out in the cemetery*; which is another proof of the intrinsic value of Oakland property. But a man need not die in Oakland, unless he wants to, till he is rich *enough* to pay his funeral expenses without *feeling* it. And I will present the best lot there is out there, to any depreciator of our city, *if he will agree to die right away*. Such a donation would assist, *indirectly* at least, the Ladies' Benevolent Association of this city.

For *us*, then, the future is secure. We occupy unequaled vantage ground on the great highway of nations. Space has been almost annihilated between here and the East, so that we can throw a kiss to our old mothers back in the old homesteads, even while we stand so near the islands of the sea and the nations of the Orient that they can *hear* us say to *them*, "Give us your varied and rich products in exchange for our gold and our grain!" Oakland needs, just now, one or two men who shall do as much for *mercantile architecture* as Dr. Merritt and a great many others have done for residence architecture. And I think this want will be supplied. I have been permitted to examine, already, the plans of two or three beautiful structures soon to be erected off of Broadway, and I am told by one who ought to know that the *bank folks* are soon to commence a magnificent building on the corner of Twelfth street and Broadway. I have



opposed *this* scheme all I *dare*; but fighting a bank is uphill work, and I have finally concluded to subside.

*Some* of the older citizens of Oakland, who had boundless faith in her future greatness, are gone; and as I walk these streets, musing on the past, I sometimes feel *lonesome*, even at home and among friends. I think of Brayton, one of my early teachers, a man of gentle, loving spirit, who reminded one of the quiet stream that flows *silently* on toward the ocean, seeming to *feel* its way down through the lowlands and between the high banks and rugged cliffs, but whose current, nevertheless, is steady and strong and irresistible. And I often recall Tompkins, who resembled, rather, the mountain torrent, leaping over or sweeping away every barrier, and reaching the level plain beyond, before the plodding husbandman is ready for its approach. And I remember Shafter, who, during his more vigorous years, swept along like a *flood* of water, at times a little restless and turbid, but overwhelming everything in its way by the very might and majesty of its immense volume. And Henry Durant, of blessed memory, alas, what *can* I say of him? What a multitude of thoughts *throng* the mind at the very mention of that sacred name! He was the noiseless river, the rushing torrent, the majestic flood and the sublime ocean all in one. For five years my beloved teacher—nay, he will continue to be my teacher till *life* shall *end*—and for many years more one of my associates in business, and I may say, without presumption, that I was acquainted with every *phase* of his most remarkable character and familiar with every avenue to his great, sympathetic, loving heart. How boundless was his faith in the future of our city! How confidently did he predict that, at no distant day, the space intervening between Berkeley and Oakland would be filled up; that our young and vigorous mother—my own *alma* mother—on yonder eminence, would reach out her arms towards her sons and her daughters in the valley below, until, before the eyes of all of us shall have become dim, they shall first meet, then embrace, then *kiss* each other!

How rapidly is that prediction becoming verified! But even were I competent to the task, this is not the time nor the place to pronounce his eulogy. Much as we miss these men, we would not, if we could, call them back to this scene of turmoil

and strife. In their peaceful graves they sleep *well*; let them rest.

I do not *believe* in drawing fancy pictures; but I *do* believe we have the logical right to judge the future by the past when every obstacle in the way of the future has been *removed* by the past. And, in view of this most prosperous and grand outlook for our city, I *claim the right* to tell you that I see before me, in the clear future, our water front lined with warehouses, docks and wharves, in front of which are safely moored multitudes of steamers and merchantmen from every clime; that I see along our principal streets costly and spacious edifices devoted to trade extending one mile from the water's edge and occupying ground which will sell at \$1500, \$2000 and \$2500 per front foot; that I see the State University containing its one thousand students *within* the northern limit of the city; that I see two thousand charming villas lining the foot hills north of the city; that I see the city stretching out toward the east, extending far into the valley beyond; that I see 200,000 people, the most intelligent, the most happy and the most free; and I think I see on yonder height, in the distance, the gilded dome of our State Capitol, whose turrets and towers are kissed by the rays of a genial sun, and from whose summit the *flag of our country*, waving in ample folds in the tempered breeze, its greeting and its welcome to the stranger from every clime, and saying to him, "*Come, make this your home!*"









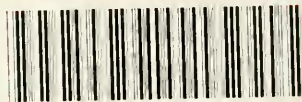








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